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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA: FEBRUARY 17 -
MAINTAIN ISLAMIC MORALS AND SOLIDARITY

Classified By: Acting Consul General Hector Morales, for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

FROM MECCA, IMAM CALLS FOR ISLAMIC MORALS AND UNITY AND TO
ABJURE NON-MUSLIM FESTIVALS

¶1. (U) On Friday February 17, the sermon from the Holy Mosques in Mecca and Media dealt with Islamic identity and the importance of ethics in Islam. From Mecca, Shaykh Sa'd Bin-Ibrahim al-Shuraym delivered a sermon regretting the current state of affairs in the Islamic world saying "Those observing the Muslims' state of affairs and principles will undoubtedly judge that Muslims have to reconsider and correct their situation and to be a nation that is followed by others rather than a nation that follows others."

¶2. (U) The imam also lamented the fact that the media revolution and culture conflict have influenced and derailed Muslims from the pillars of their religion, although Muslims have their own doctrines and legislation. As a result, he says, the influence of the imported media has increased and some Muslims "are eager to receive everything new and strange without considering its negative aspects." He warned that "the foreign invasion" has deprived some Muslims "of their moral and ideological identity."

IMAM CALLS FOR FAITHFUL TO REJECT INSIDIOUS FOREIGN
CELEBRATIONS

¶3. (U) The imam continued, warning Muslims against participating in non-Muslim festivals "such as the so-called Valentine Day or Mother's Day." He asserted these pose dangers to Muslims' doctrines and ethics and violate the Prophet's teachings, describing Muslims who participate in such festivals as simple-minded. The imam also said that Islam is the religion of love in all times and places and that it is wrong for Muslims to participate in such non-Islamic festivals.

FROM MEDINA: CALL FOR MUSLIMS TO EXHIBIT GOOD BEHAVIOR

¶4. (U) In a sermon broadcast live from the Holy Mosque in Medina, Shaykh Ali Abd al-Rahman al-Hudhayfi delivered a sermon praising God and the messenger. He admonished his listeners to be of good character and conduct, and to carry out their duties toward God and protect people's rights. Technical difficulties prevented the remainder of the sermon from being heard.

FROM THE EASTERN PROVINCE: SOLIDARITY OF THE UMMA BRINGS
STRENGTH

15. (C) At Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in Khobar, before more than 500 worshipers, Shaykh al-Qahtani extended his commentary concerning the Danish Cartoons for another week. The imam praised the Muslim community for the powerful message it was sending the world. He said all Muslims, regardless of sect, national affiliation or background, even those that he described as "borderline" Muslims, should be proud of their achievements in the past weeks. "If there's one positive outcome of this crisis, it's the fact that the Danes have succeeded where others have failed by unifying Muslim ranks across the wide spectrum. Those cartoons have outraged even those who rarely, if ever, perform their religious duties and are Muslims in name only. The love for faith and for the Prophet Mohammed has driven us all to go out to the streets. This same love has also united us." He then called from Muslims to remain unified and to invest the goodwill that is a direct result of the cartoon crisis to the benefit of the Umma (the Muslim community) and its followers. Morales